IN THE CLAIMS:

The status of each claim that has been introduced in the above-referenced application is set forth below. The ensuing listing of the claims replaces all prior claims listings.

1. (currently amended) An apparatus for polishing one or more layers of a semiconductor device structure, comprising:

a polishing pad;

a subpad support located adjacent said polishing pad, said subpad support including a subpad retention element; and

a subpad ~~removably secured to said subpad support by way of said subpad retention element, said subpad being~~ located between said subpad support and said polishing pad and removably secured to said subpad support by way of said subpad retention element while remaining unsecured relative to said polishing pad.

2. (original) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said polishing pad comprises one of a web format polishing pad and a belt format polishing pad.

3. (withdrawn) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said subpad retention element comprises a clamp configured to retain at least a portion of a periphery of said subpad.

4. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said subpad retention element comprises negative pressure applicable to a bottom surface of said subpad through said subpad support.

5. (withdrawn) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said subpad retention element mechanically engages a complementary structure on or adjacent to a bottom surface of said subpad.

6. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 1, further comprising a substantially rigid structure on a bottom surface of said subpad.

7. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 6, wherein said substantially rigid structure is secured to said bottom surface of said subpad.

8. (original) The apparatus of claim 6, wherein said substantially rigid structure comprises a polymer.

9. (original) The apparatus of claim 6, wherein said substantially rigid structure comprises a metal.

10. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 6, wherein said substantially rigid structure comprises a dense region of said subpad at said bottom surface thereof.

11. (original) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said subpad support comprises at least one lip configured to at least partially prevent lateral movement of a subpad assembled with and secured to said subpad support.

12. (original) The apparatus of claim 11, wherein said at least one lip substantially completely laterally surrounds a peripheral edge of said subpad.

13. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein a bottom surface of said subpad is substantially free of adhesive material.

14. (original) The apparatus of claim 1, including a subpad access element.

15. (original) The apparatus of claim 14, wherein said subpad access element is configured to at least partially move said polishing pad away from said subpad support.

16. (original) The apparatus of claim 14, wherein said subpad access element moves a polishing pad support so as to at least partially move said polishing pad away from said subpad support.

17. (currently amended) A subpad support for use in an apparatus for polishing one or more layers of a semiconductor device structure, comprising a subpad retention element for retaining a subpad which is configured to support at least a portion of a polishing pad of the apparatus but not to be secured to the polishing pad.

18. (currently amended) The subpad support of claim 17, wherein said subpad retention element is configured to removably retain ~~a~~ the subpad.

19. (withdrawn and currently amended) The subpad support of claim 17, wherein said subpad retention element mechanically engages a corresponding feature on or adjacent to a bottom surface of ~~a~~ the subpad ~~to be assembled with the subpad support~~.

20. (currently amended) The subpad support of claim 17, wherein said subpad retention element is configured to apply a negative pressure to a bottom surface of ~~a~~ the subpad ~~engaged by said subpad retention element~~.

21. (withdrawn) The subpad support of claim 17, wherein said subpad retention element comprises a clamp element configured to engage at least a portion of a periphery of a subpad assembled with the subpad support.

22. (original) The subpad support of claim 17, comprising a lip configured to at least partially prevent lateral movement of a subpad assembled with the subpad support.

23. (original) The subpad support of claim 22, wherein said lip is configured to substantially completely surround a peripheral edge of said subpad.

24-39. (cancelled)

40. (currently amended) An apparatus for polishing one or more layers of a semiconductor device structure, comprising:

a polishing pad;

a subpad support located adjacent said polishing pad, said subpad support including a substantially planar subpad support surface and a subpad retention element associated with said subpad support surface; and

a subpad disposed on said subpad support surface so as to be positionable between said subpad support and said polishing pad without being secured to said polishing pad, said subpad retention element being configured to removably secure said subpad support on said subpad support surface.

41. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 40, wherein said subpad retention element comprises negative pressure applicable to a backing of said subpad through said subpad support.

42. (withdrawn) The apparatus of claim 40, wherein said subpad retention element mechanically engages a complementary structure on or adjacent to a bottom surface of said subpad.

43. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 40, wherein said subpad support comprises at least one lip configured to at least partially prevent lateral movement of a subpad assembled with and secured to said subpad support.

44. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 43, wherein said at least one lip substantially completely laterally surrounds a peripheral edge of said subpad.

45. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 40, wherein a backing of said subpad is substantially free of adhesive material.

46. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 40, including a subpad access element.

47. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 46, wherein said subpad access element is configured to at least partially move said polishing pad away from said subpad support.

48. (currently amended) The apparatus of claim ~~14~~ 46, wherein said subpad access element moves a polishing pad support so as to at least partially move said polishing pad away from said subpad support.

49. (currently amended) A subpad support for use in an apparatus for polishing one or more layers of a semiconductor device structure, comprising:

a substantially planar support surface configured to receive a subpad; and

a subpad retention element associated with said support surface so as to retain the subpad in position thereon while maintaining the subpad in nonsecured relation relative to a polishing pad of the apparatus.

50. (previously presented) The subpad support of claim 49, wherein said subpad retention element is configured to removably retain the subpad.

51. (withdrawn) The subpad support of claim 49, wherein said subpad retention element mechanically engages a corresponding feature on or adjacent to a bottom surface of the subpad.

52. (previously presented) The subpad support of claim 49, comprising wherein said subpad retention element is configured to at least partially prevent lateral movement of the subpad.

53. (previously presented) The subpad support of claim 52, wherein said subpad retention element is configured to substantially completely surround a peripheral edge of the subpad.

54. (previously presented) The subpad support of claim 49, wherein said subpad retention element is configured to apply a negative pressure to a bottom surface of the subpad.